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**THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH EXTENDS BREAST AND CERVICAL
CANCER SCREENING TO MORE WOMEN**

(RICHMOND, Va.)—The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) will increase the number of women it can screen and diagnose for breast and cervical cancer, thanks to funding allocated by the Virginia General Assembly. The funding was approved by Governor Tim Kaine in the 2006-2008 budget bill.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), many deaths from breast and cervical cancers could be prevented if cancer screening increased among women at risk. Deaths from these diseases occur disproportionately among women who are uninsured or underinsured.

Effective July 1, the General Assembly earmarked \$405,176 for each year of the 2006-2008 biennium to expand VDH's Every Woman's Life Program. The money will allow VDH to screen and diagnose more women in the 40-49 age range and provide diagnostic services to income-eligible women aged 18-39 who have symptoms of breast cancer or abnormal cervical cancer screening results. VDH expects it can provide services to approximately 1,000 additional women. Those diagnosed by the program may be eligible for treatment through the Medicaid program.

"We are grateful to the Governor and General Assembly for these additional funds," said State Health Commissioner Robert B. Stroube, M.D., M.P.H. "The funds will help us continue to address the great need for screening and diagnostic services for breast and cervical cancer."

The Every Woman's Life Program primarily targets minority and geographically isolated Virginia women who are uninsured or underinsured and whose income is below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. The target age group is 50-64, but the program serves younger women as well. Since its inception in 1997, the program has screened 18,090 women and has established 24 screening sites around the state. Until now its sole source of funds was approximately \$2.4 million a year from the CDC.

"We do everything we can to screen as many women as possible," said Kathleen Rocco, director of the Every Woman's Life Program. The CDC allows the program to use 40 percent of its federal funds for administrative purposes. However, the program has cut its administrative costs to 20 percent and uses the savings to screen more women.

To learn more about the Every Woman's Life program, visit www.vahealth.org/breastcancer.

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